

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02 CIEP-02

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /047 W
----- 070000

R 100750Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6487

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

UNCLAS GABORONE 0490

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SF, BC, WZ, LT

SUBJECT: ECT, FY-1976 SA CRAG AND BLS COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

REF: PRETORIA 1174

CAPE TON FOR EMBASSY

1. REFTEL HIGHLIGHTS CONFUSION SURROUNDING RELATIONSHIP OF REGIONAL OFFICERS IN JOHANNESBURG AND THE EMBASSIES IN BLS STATES. WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE EFFORTS OF PRETORIA TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION. OVER PAST YEAR WE HAVE HAD ONE EIGHT-HOUR VISIT BY LABOR ATTACHE, VISIT OF ONE WEEK BY COMMERCIAL OFFICER AND NOT A SINGLE VISIT BY THE REGIONAL MINERALS ATTACHE. WE APPRECIATE SUCH SUPPORT AS HAS BEEN PROVIDED AND HOPE EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT REGIONAL PERSONNEL MEET THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN BLS STATES INCLUDING COMMERCIAL OFFICERS.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE HAVE A LONGSTANDING REQUEST FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO GABORONE COVER
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THE BLS STATES. WE STILL SEE THIS AS THE SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEM.

A WELL QUALIFIED ECOCOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER COULD IDENTIFY, ANALYZE AND FOLLOW UP ON THE INCREASING NUMBER OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BLS STATES. HE COULD ALSO DO LABOR, MINERALS AND OTHER REPORTING. ONE OF THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS AGAINST ASSIGNING AN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO GABORONE HAS BEEN THAT THE REGIONAL OFFICERS IN JOHANNESBURG CAN ADEQUATELY PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT. PRETORIA'S REFTEL GOES A LONG WAY TOWARD DESPELLING THE MYTH OF AVAILABILITY OF SUCH REGIONAL SUPPORT. HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL THEREFORE GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF A REGIONAL ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO GABORONE.

3. IF THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT ASSIGN AN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO GABORNE TO COVER THE BLS STATES, WE MUST OF COURSE CONTINUE TO RELY ON REGIONAL SUPPORT FROM CONGEN JOHANNESBURG. IT IS ESSENTIAL HOWEVER THAT THE TRAVEL BUDGET FOR REGIONAL COMMERCIAL, LABOR AND MINERALS OFFICERS SHOULD BE FUNDED THROUGH THE BLS EMBASSY BUDGETS. THIS BUDGET PROCEDURE ALLOCATION IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES (I.E., TIME) ALLOCATED TO BLS. ANY OTHER PROCEDURE WOULD LEAVE THE BLS IN THE POSITION OF HAVING ITS PRIORITIES NOT ONLY OF OFFICERS' TIME BUT ALSO OF TRAVEL FUNDS DETERMINED WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT. REGARDING PRIORITIES, CONCUR WITH THE IDEA THAT PRACTICAL COMPROMISES CAN BE WORKED OUT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GABORO00490
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750125-0154
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750464/aaaacglx.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PRETORIA 1174
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 JUN 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <21 JAN 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ECT, FY-1976 SA CRAG AND BLS COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES
TAGS: BEXP, SF, BC, WZ, LT
To: STATE PRETORIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006